

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /070 W

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R 101338Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8626

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: LABOR'S RIGHT SWEEPS PLP ELECTIONS

SUMMARY. OVER THE PAST WEEK LABOR MP'S HAVE HELD A SERIES OF ELECTIONS TO SELECT THEIR BACKBENCH LEADERSHIP.

AS IN THE PAST, THE RIGHT-WING HAS SCORED SWEEPING VICTORIES, ASSURING ITS CONTINUED ASCENDENCY IN THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY (PLP). IN AN ELECTION FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOR DELEGATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, HOWEVER, DELEGATION MEMBERS SELECTED A YOUNG AND ABLE LEFT-WINGER TO LEAD THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. CHAIRMAN OF THE PLP CLEDWYN HUGHES, A RIGHT-WINGER, WAS RE-ELECTED LAST WEEK. HE WAS NOT OPPOSED. THE RE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAING SIX LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ON THE PLP LIAISON COMM-

ITTEE WERE CONTESTED BY THE RIGHT-WING MANIFESTO AND LEFT WING TRIBUNE GROUPS, BOTH OF WHICH HAD SLATES OF CANDIDATES. THE RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 9. AS ANTICIPATED, THE MANIFESTOITES CONTINUED THEIR DOMINATION OF THE PLP, WINNING ALL OF THE REMAINING POSITIONS. FRED WILLEY, A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE MANIFESTO GROUP, WAS ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LIAISON COMMITTEE, THE OFFICIAL LINK BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE BACKBENCHES, ARE: SIDNEY IRVING, CHAIRMAN OF THE MANIFESTO GROUP; THOMAS URWIN, A RIGHT-WINGER WHO LEADS THE PLP'S TRADE UNION GROUP; JOHN CARTWRIGHT, A RIGHT-WING MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY NEC; PHILIP WHITEHEAD, A LEADING MANIFESTOITE; AND JACK ASHLEY, ANOTHER NEC MODERATE.

2. NEIL KINNOCK AND NORMAN BUCHAN WERE THE MOST POPULAR ON THE TRIBUNE SLATE, FINISHING AHEAD OF SUCH LEFTIST LUMINARIES AS JUDITH HART AND FRANK ALLAUN, BOTH OF WHOM ARE MEMBERS OF THE NEC, BUT FAILED TO GET ELECTED.

3. EARLIER THIS WEEK THE 19-MEMBER LABOR DELEGATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTED LEFT-WINGER JOHN PRESCOTT AS ITS LEADER, REPLACING FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY MICHAEL STEWART. PRESCOTT, WHOM WE UNDERSTAND HAS BEEN ONE OF THE HARDEST WORKING AND MOST EFFECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION, OPPOSED EC MEMBERSHIP DURING THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN AND HAS SINCE BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF BOTH THE COMMISSION AND THE PARLIAMENT.

4. COMMENT. FOR THE THIRD SUCCESSIVE YEAR THE RIGHT-WINGERS HAVE DOMINATED THE LIAISON COMMITTEE, TOTALLY EXCLUDING LEFT-WING REPRESENTATION THIS YEAR AND LAST. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE PRESCOTT'S ELECTION WAS MORE A REFLECTION OF MERIT THAN IDEOLOGY -- HIS OPPONENT, RICHARD MITCHELL, IS AN OLDER AND UNDISTINGUISHED LABOR BACKBENCHER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON19969
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760457-0284
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761255/aaaabuym.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR'S RIGHT SWEEPS PLP ELECTIONS SUMMARY. OVER THE PAST WEEK LABOR MP'S HAVE HELD A SERIES OF ELECTIONS TO SELECT THEIR BACKBENCH LEAD
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK, PLP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006